



LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

County of Los Angeles
Sheriff's Department Headquarters
4700 Ramona Boulevard
Monterey Park, California 91754-2169



October 28, 2005

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

NURSE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) and East Los Angeles College (ELAC) have formed a partnership to recruit and retain nurses for the custody environment by providing enhanced educational opportunities. This partnership was made possible by the Affiliation Agreement with ELAC approved by your Board on April 19, 2005.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, California has the highest wages in the nation for nursing professionals. However, it ranks 49 out of 50 in the number of nursing professionals per 1,000 population. This shocking statistic, combined with the forecast that existing educational programs will not meet the need for nursing professionals in the foreseeable future, does not bode well for the County health care system. Currently, almost all nursing programs in California are operating at maximum capacity. Most of these programs also have significant waiting lists. It is not uncommon to wait for up to two years for a vacancy. The main reasons for the wait are a lack of clinical sites, classrooms, and teaching staff.

The Sheriff's Department Medical Services Bureau and LASD University staff met with the ELAC Nursing Program Chairperson, Ms. Lureleane Gaines, to develop a cooperative effort allowing the Sheriff's Department to participate in two existing programs: a Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) to Registered Nurse (RN) program and a two-year generic RN program.

A Tradition of Service

The LVN to RN program is a nine-month curriculum leading to an Associate of Nursing Degree as a Registered Nurse (RN). This program provides the participating LVNs with the requisite college courses to become an RN and successfully take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) exam, a requirement to obtain a nursing license from the California Board of Registered Nursing (CBRN).

The two-year generic RN program curriculum leads directly to an Associate in Science Degree, Nursing (RN). The CBRN has approved LASD's Correctional Treatment Center at Twin Towers Correctional Facility for use in the programs. This approval provides the additional clinical sites needed by ELAC and offers students a view of the opportunities afforded in correctional nursing.

Both programs allow for on-duty attendance by participating Department employees in exchange for a two-year commitment to work as Staff Nurse, Sheriff upon graduation. In addition, under current Federal grant guidelines identifying jail inmates as an underserved population, participating students may apply to have their student loans forgiven by committing to a two-year employment agreement upon completion of their education.

Should you or your staffs have any questions, please contact me or Chief Marc L. Klugman of Correctional Services Division, at (213) 893-5017.

Sincerely,



LEROY D. BACA
SHERIFF